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ABSTRACT

The Institute of Professional Librarians of Ontario suggests that these guidelines be the minimum requirements for the employment of a registered professional librarian. Under conditions of employment, the guidelines provide for an employment contract, a probation period, job security, and promotion opportunities. Methods are suggested for making appointments and terminating employment. Under conditions of work, a 35-hour work week and a twenty-day paid vacation are recommended. Other types of leave, fringe benefits, evaluation and grievance procedures, and opportunities for continuing education and professional development are also suggested. (PF)

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GUIDELINES OF EMPLOYMENT AND WORKING CONDITIONS
FOR REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL LIBRARIANS EMPLOYED IN
LIBRARIES IN ONTARIO

PREAMBLE - OBJECTIVES OF THE I.P.L.O.

The following objectives are implicit in the Act respecting the Institute (Bill Pr 40), the by-laws of the corporation and the decisions of the Board:

1. To promote and improve the services provided by all libraries in Ontario in which professional librarians are employed.
2. To promote, advance and maintain the interests and welfare of librarians registered with the Institute.
3. To foster and co-operate with other Ontario, Canadian or international organizations with similar objectives.
4. To encourage and engage in research and study which will support the programmes of the Institute and inform its members about the profession.

In pursuance of these objectives the Institute is issuing these guidelines and recommending their acceptance by employers and their application to all professional librarians on staff. It is hoped that these guidelines will make a positive contribution to the general personnel policies adopted for all library staff members and that in any discussions of standards of employment and working conditions among library employees in general, the professional librarian will use this statement, or any subsequent revisions, as the minimum requirements for the employment of a registered professional librarian.

It is recognized that the organization in which the professional librarian is employed, in return for fair personnel practices and the acceptance of these guidelines, has a right to expect a high standard of performance and ethical behaviour compatible with the aims and objectives of the individual library from any registered member of the Institute of Professional Librarians of Ontario. The employer is referred to the Code of Ethics which has been adopted by the Institute and which is binding on all members.

The I.P.L.O., as the only legally recognized organization of professional librarians in Ontario, believes that library service can be improved and maintained at a high level if every library organization establishes and maintains written personnel policies which are the result of the participation of the staff and the employer, which are reviewed and revised regularly and which are freely accessible to all members of the staff.

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A. CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

1. Appointments

Although the recruiting, short listing, interviewing or processing of applicants for any position may be delegated, the final appointment of an applicant for a professional position other than that of chief librarian shall be made by the chief librarian. The final appointment of the chief librarian shall be made by the highest authority in the institution. The immediate supervisor of the new employee shall be involved as much as possible in the selection process. Applications shall be kept confidential and the applicant's current employer shall be consulted only with the consent of the applicant.

Appointments shall be made on the basis of professional competence of the applicant as a result of an evaluation of experience and qualifications as they apply to the specifications of the job. There will be no discrimination on the basis of race, age, sex, including sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, or religion.

2. Employment Contract

Before the final appointment of a professional librarian to a position, conditions of employment and of work shall be clearly stated and be confirmed in writing. The statement shall also indicate the date on which the offer of employment expires. The employee shall acknowledge the statement in writing and this document shall then be considered an employment contract.

No major changes in the terms of employment shall be made without consulting the employee. Changes consented to by the employee shall be acknowledged in writing and this document shall then be considered part of the employment contract.

3. Probation

A probation period shall be required for all new appointments as well as for all promotions. The length of the probation period should be six months in the case of new appointments and three months in the case of promotions. These time periods can be extended if exceptional circumstances have made it impossible to arrive at a fair evaluation of the employee's performance during the initial period. At the end of the probationary period an evaluation of performance (following the procedure outlined in B.5). shall be conducted and, if satisfactory, a permanent appointment shall be made.

4. Job Security

Job security (non dismissal without cause) shall be assured to all permanent employees, dependent on the satisfactory performance of their duties.

5. Promotion

Whenever positions become vacant or new positions are created, a job description shall be posted within the library for a period of five days before the vacancy is posted or advertised outside the library. Internal and external applicants shall be considered simultaneously using the criteria outlined in A.1. Seniority will be used to select from two or more internal applicants of equal evaluation.

6. Termination of Employment

- a) The requirement of the employing library in regard to the period of notice to be given by a resigning employee shall be specified in the terms of employment and the employee shall abide by such specification. Resignations shall be made in writing, giving the effective date and shall be acknowledged by the employer. One month is recommended by the Institute as the minimum period of notice required from a professional librarian.
- b) Professional librarians may be discharged for the unsatisfactory performance of their duties and/or failure to abide by the terms of employment. Whenever dismissal is being considered, the employee must be interviewed and given a written warning outlining the problem and stating that continuation of the problem will lead to dismissal. The warning shall contain reason(s) for the warning, recommendations for improvement, a statement that termination is possible and a date when the situation will be reviewed. All copies of the warning shall be signed by the employee. If the employee's performance continues to be unsatisfactory, the employee will be given written notification of the termination and the effective date. The employee shall have the power, through a grievance procedure, to question the decision before dismissal is final. The period of notice required from a library authority should be the same as that required from a professional librarian who is resigning.
- c) If, as a result of financial exigency or the discontinuation of a library program or activity, it is necessary to terminate a professional appointment, every effort shall be made to transfer the professional librarian affected to some other activity for which he or she is qualified. If this is not possible, notice shall be given as far in advance as possible (in no case less than six months). The employee shall have the power to question the decision before it becomes final. Every assistance possible shall be provided to the employee in finding a suitable position elsewhere, and an explanatory statement shall be provided for use in seeking a position. All documents and records resulting from such terminations shall clearly state that the termination was made without prejudice.

- d) The Institute does not recommend compulsory retirement as an inflexible rule. When a professional librarian has reached the age of retirement some consideration should be given to the performance, capacity and wishes of the employee before a decision on retirement is made. Yearly renewable appointments and part-time employment are recommended as possible alternatives to termination.
- e) Whatever the circumstances under which a professional librarian leaves the employ of a library authority, an exit interview should be held between the departing employee and the person in higher authority deemed most likely to elicit an honest reaction.

7. Part-Time Employment

Regular permanent employment on a part-time basis shall be subject to the same standards and conditions of employment as full-time permanent staff. In general, benefits and vacations should be calculated on a proportional basis or the employee should receive some other form of compensation.

8. Temporary Employment

All conditions of employment including the terms of employment, pay and responsibilities shall be clearly defined for the benefit of any professional librarian accepting temporary employment in a library.

9. Personnel Records

The confidentiality of personnel records must be carefully preserved. Documents obtained with a guarantee of confidentiality (i.e. reference letters) should either be destroyed after they have served their purpose or kept in a separate file. Information from the employee's file should be provided only when the need for the information has been clearly established. The employee should be notified in writing whenever any information is provided from his file. He/she should also receive a copy of all documents added to or deleted from his file.

B. CONDITIONS OF WORK

1. Hours of Work

There shall be a definite number of hours specified as the employee's work week. The recommended maximum number is thirty-five. It is recognized that some library positions will require shift work and Saturday or Sunday duty. Employees should be advised of such requirements prior to appointment. Some form of compensation such as extra pay or extra time off should be provided for employees required to be available during time periods other than those specified at the time of employment.

2. Vacation and Leave

- a) The professional librarian shall be granted a minimum of twenty working days of paid vacation per annum.
- b) A definite amount of sick leave with pay shall be allowed annually. It is recommended that sick leave be not less than one and a half days a month, and that it be cumulative to give protection to the employee in case of prolonged illness. Sick leave accumulated during an employee's period of employment should be portable. If this is not possible, the employee should receive monetary compensation for such sick leave.
- c) Compassionate leave with pay shall be granted in the event of death or serious illness in the immediate family of the employee or that of his/her spouse. In view of the changing definition of the family unit, it is recommended that in defining "immediate family" consideration be given to extending the usual meaning of the word.
- d) The statutory holidays listed in the Employment Standards Act shall be the minimum granted to professional librarians. It is recommended that as suggested by the Ontario Human Rights Commission, those individuals whose holy days are not recognized by statute be given additional days off. The holy days agreed upon by the employer and employee as being essential to the proper observance of the employee's religion should be specified in the letter of appointment. The terms under which such days are granted should also be indicated.
- e) Maternity leave as specified by law (Women's Equal Employment Opportunity Act) should be the minimum granted regardless of the size of the institution. It is recommended that paternity leave of three to five days should also be granted. The terms of both maternity and paternity leave including the length and the pay arrangements shall be specified. It is also recommended that fringe benefits be continued throughout the maternity leave.
- f) Provision should be made for the granting of periodical temporary or sabbatical leave for the purpose of improving performance through a learning experience, research, travel, writing or other activity relevant to the practice of librarianship. The conditions under which a leave may be granted should be made clear to the professional librarian.

3. Fringe Benefits

- a) The library authority should contribute no less than 50% of the cost of health insurance (e.g. OHIP) and should assist employees who wish to obtain extended health benefits. The opportunity to obtain long term disability insurance should also be provided.

- b) The conditions of employment shall include a retirement plan and the provision of a pension, the terms of which shall be made clear to the employee at the time of appointment. The pension plan provided by the institution should allow for early retirement if the employee so wishes. All employees should receive an annual report on the state of their pension.

4. Job Description

In order that the responsibilities and standards of performance required will be clear to both employer and employee, there shall be a job description, a position classification plan and a salary scale with provision for regular increments and possible promotions for all professional librarians within the library. To ensure accuracy, job descriptions should be reviewed on a regular basis. Within the framework of the job requirements, the employer should strive to set goals and objectives which challenge and best utilize the professional librarian's abilities. Copies of all documents should be made available to employees.

5. Evaluation

The performance of a professional librarian should be evaluated at least once a year. The evaluation should be based on the job description and/or the goals and objectives previously agreed upon by the employee. To ensure that such an evaluation is objective it shall be made by an appointed evaluator as a result of a conference with the person being evaluated, be put in writing by the evaluator, discussed with the person being evaluated, signed by both parties and reviewed by the chief librarian. If the librarian being evaluated so desires, a statement of his or her own can be added to and filed with the evaluation. The use of peers and/or committees as evaluators should be considered.

6. Grievances

All library authorities should have a clearly defined grievance procedure to deal with internal problems. The procedure should be as uncomplicated as possible with specified time limits within which each step of the procedure is to be completed. The procedure should be communicated to all professional librarians and should be of such nature as to ensure a fair hearing and follow-up action.

7. Continuing Education and Professional Development

The professional librarian has responsibility for his or her own professional growth and development. Nevertheless, the library authority shall encourage its employees to continue the process through such means as:

- a) a period of orientation to their new duties;
- b) adequate services of supervision and consultation;
- c) leave of absence with pay, when appropriate, to take part in conferences and workshops in keeping with the professional duties of librarianship;
- d) leave of absence with pay to exercise responsibilities in a professional organization or a recognized library association;
- e) leave of absence with pay and/or reimbursement of fees for courses relevant to the librarian's professional duties;
- f) leave of absence for scholarly research and assistance in the filing of applications for research grants.

8. Political Activity

Employees should have the freedom to participate in political and community activities. Such participation, however, should be undertaken solely as a responsibility of the individual without involving the employer except in the case where an employee is presenting himself/herself as a candidate to an elected office in which instance some provision for a leave of absence should be made.

9. Channels of Communication

The chief librarian shall have the responsibility for ensuring that there are channels of communication between the professional staff and the administration and the library authority. But while the Institute of Professional Librarians of Ontario (IPLO) recognizes the hierarchical and organizational authority vested in the chief librarian as valid, it urges chief librarians to remember that in dealing with professional librarians, he or she is dealing with colleagues, that is, with persons who share in professional authority by virtue of their training, education, experience and dedication to library service. In consultation with the professional librarians on his staff, the chief librarian should devise ways and means whereby the professional staff can participate in the interpretation and modification of library policies and their implementation. Maximum staff involvement in ongoing changes is also recommended. A written manual of personnel practices shall be available to every staff member. This manual should include: (a) a clear description of the organization, indicating the relationship of each position within the organization and showing the lines of authority; and (b) a clear description of ways in which new or modified policies may be originated, decided on and carried out. Any changes in personnel policies or procedures shall be made known to all professional staff members before they are implemented.